

Fall 2005

Pro Musica Newsletter, Fall 2005

Bowling Green State University. College of Musical Arts

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Aaron Marx

A Week of Ear Training at the Institute for Musical Perception

During the week of July 24, 2005, I attended an intensive ear-training workshop with Marianne Ploger organized through what she calls “The Institute for Musical Perception.” The Institute is essentially a cottage industry. Marianne holds an adjunct university position teaching conducting through the University of Michigan, but aside from that she makes her livelihood entirely through freelance teaching. This weeklong workshop was the first of its kind.

Marianne’s approach to ear training is more effective than any I have experienced. After only four days I felt the seeds of certain very advanced musical skills were planted and I need only to cultivate them to reach true proficiency. Fundamental to her entire approach is the idea of relegating the conscious mind to tasks for which it is well suited, and learning to dismiss them when they are only in the way; very much like Zen meditation. I felt that the week was as much about harnessing brainpower as it was about musicianship, and that the effective use of one’s brain is a discipline with universal applications. Her approach to teaching (solfege [Fr.] or solfeggio [It.] meaning a textless vocal exercise) was a good example of this.

Marianne teaches fixed-doh in the French manner. She advocates this system because it allows fluid modulation between keys whereas movable-doh does not. To become fluent with solfege, she trained us to visualize a keyboard in our imagination with syllables printed on the keys, and to use a finger (real at first, but eventually imaginary) to track along the keys while following a musical line, simply verbalizing whichever syllable our finger landed on. With this system one does not have to think about which syllable goes with which note, but to simply see it in their imagination.

Marianne also demonstrated her theories of harmony and voice leading, which, if allowed to disseminate to more contemporary classical musicians, could revolutionize the way music is composed, played, and taught. One such theory is Dichord Theory, which examines every possible interval between two notes (there are 11 total) and classifies them by three characteristics, all of which are perceivable to the ear. After identifying those characteristics, it is simply a matter of training one’s imagination to associate certain distinguishing features with certain intervals to identify them. It is important to note that this method of identification is based entirely on sensation and not on cognition. Identifying intervals becomes like identifying colors. Thus, a composer who masters dichord identification may become the equivalent of a sound painter, simply notating the music in their imagination!

Another theory Marianne presented is her theory of Heptachord Shift, which explains tonal modulation, especially in the works of J.S. Bach. Heptachord Shift is a way of explaining the unexplainable modulations in Bach’s music. The theory greatly simplifies the tools required to determine key at any given moment in a way that actually exploits the way the brain perceives music. Marianne asserts and demonstrates that a listener is aware of the tonic based on whatever heptachord (group of seven notes) is present in music at any given time. Based on the principle that scale degrees 1, 4, 5 and 7 are necessary for the indication of the tonic, it is simply a matter of determining which scale has 1, 4, 5 and 7 present at any given time. With a thorough understanding of this theory, an improvising or composing musician can modulate to any key at any time, fluidly and imperceptibly, the way Bach was able to do.

It is difficult to communicate the essence of training I received from my study at the Institute with Marianne, but I say that she has a deeper understanding of musical science, or the way the brain perceives and makes sense of music more than any person I have studied with thus far. I look forward to further study with her and I urge every musician to become familiar with her theories and methods and should they prove superior to methods already practiced, adopt them as their own on the premise that they are principled, effective and true.

My thanks to Pro Musica for the grant I received to attend this curious and expansive workshop.

Ryan Muncy

Music and Art in Florence

There are few opportunities that surpass the intensity and profound effect of studying abroad for the student and performer. This summer I participated in the “Music and Art in Florence” program in Florence, Italy, from May 19 -June 25.

The experience was important to my growth in several regards: first, it immersed me in Italian culture (language, art, cuisine, temperament and society), second, my knowledge of Italian Renaissance and Gothic art grew exponentially, connecting the visual and aural arts and how they influenced each other in this period and later, and third, this summer greatly increased my experience as an international performer (giving five concerts).

An on-site art history class examined important works of Renaissance and Gothic art throughout Florence and Tuscany. We were able to see original art works and tour architectural works of this period. Our course met twice weekly in Florence at the Uffizi Gallery, the Accademia, the Bargello and at important churches Santa Maria Novella, Santa Croce and Santa Maria del Fiore to name a few. Each Saturday, we took extensive field trips throughout Tuscany to examine art from competing counties surrounding Florence, such as Pisa, Lucca, Sienna and Arezzo.

In the musicology section we examined the history of Renaissance music in Florence, including composers, important church figures, and the Medici family. We also examined the music of Luciano Berio, a monumental force in Italian and contemporary music of the 20th century that helped to illustrate the influence of powerful figures in the development of Florentine music and how religious and social events created new music.

Finally, I participated in a course with Dr. John Sampan and three other saxophonists from Bowling Green. We rehearsed almost daily in a garage and gave five concerts throughout our course of study. Four were in Florence and one was in the south of Italy in Trani, along the Adriatic coast. We premiered new music by Dr. Marilyn Shrude and other student composers studying in Italy. We collaborated with other Italian saxophonists, including Marco Albonetti, a BGSU alumnus, and the saxophone class of the Cherubini conservatory in Florence. This was particularly beneficial, for we found ourselves reaching a mutual understanding while working toward a common goal.

The program also afforded me the opportunity to work on my Italian skills. As a semi-fluent French speaker, I found after several weeks I could communicate on a basic level; I attribute this improvement to my knowledge of French, but I developed Italian linguistic skills because of this program.

Pro Musica awarded me \$500 toward this adventure. I am grateful to them for helping students who seek international experience.

BGSU

WE HAVE A NEW LOOK this fall with a new logo & FALL NEWSLETTER!

Our new logo was designed by senior graphic design major Lucas Hughart from Edgerton.



Pro Musica supports the College of Musical Arts by inviting the participation of alumni, friends, parents and the Bowling Green community in a wide variety of musical events and by providing financial support for projects that are often beyond the reach of state funding.

Dear Members,

Looking back on Pro Musica’s accomplishments in 2004-05, I am pleased to report that in the spring of 2005 we awarded an undergraduate scholarship of \$1,000 to Mary Ryan, a senior music education major from Fremont, and a graduate scholarship of \$1,500 to Jeffrey Heisler, a master’s degree candidate in performance from Lapeer, Mich. These scholarships were funded from the interest generated by our Pro Musica endowment.

On December 10, the College of Musical Arts presents the 39th Annual Competitions in Music Performance. The event begins with a light supper and continues with a concert featuring the competition’s finalists, some of the college’s top talents. We hope that you will participate in this fundraiser Pro Musica sponsored by attending this delightful musical evening.

Last year Pro Musica’s membership fees funded travel domestically or internationally to 56 students for participation in educational programs, competitions, concerts, conferences, master classes and research projects. Students traveled to Italy, France, Greece, Austria, Ghana, Taiwan and from the east to west coasts of the United States.

Paul Bolin, a freshman in music education and vocal performance from Greytown, is the newest member of the Pro Musica Board. He represents the student members of Pro Musica, a new category of membership, created to familiarize students with the mission of Pro Musica, and to make Pro Musica members aware of the financial needs of our students.

The Pro Musica Board, as well as the students and faculty of the College of Musical Arts, greatly appreciate your financial support and encouragement, which greatly enhance educational opportunities and experiences for our students.

Ramona Cormier
President



39th Celebrate Excellence! Annual Competitions in Music Performance

Final Round Concert
Saturday, December 10
8:00 p.m.
Kobacker Hall

Officers

Ramona Cormier, president
Karol Spencer, vice president
Virginia Marks, secretary
Nancy Lenhart, treasurer
Special thanks to:
Nancy Lenhart, editor of
Pro Musica News

Profiles In Pedagogy: Barbara Lockard Zimmerman

If you can't find Barbara Lockard sipping elderberry wine on the set of *Arsenic and Old Lace*, you might catch a flying glimpse of her by following the cacophony of sounds and exclamations echng through the halls of Bowling Green State University's College of Musical Arts.



A precocious child by age four, Barbara answered the call to sing a duet on stage at Vacation Bible School. Afterwards, her mother took her to a local voice teacher who pronounced her "a hopeless monotone who will never sing." Then the teacher died, unexpectedly, never to witness her fatal error with Barbara, a vocally talented, articulate and determined little girl.

Growing up in West Frankfort, Ill. (300 miles south of Chicago), Barbara, an only child, was her mother's 'full-time hobby.' Her father was a banker who also taught penmanship. Barbara took elocution lessons at age five and piano at eight. After finishing high school, she enrolled at Indiana University, graduating in 1956 with a bachelor's in music education, a master's in vocal pedagogy, voice and music literature in 1957 and a doctorate in voice and opera stage direction in 1978.

Her summers were filled with opera performances and theatre repertory. Mastering the art of acting, Barbara became known for her comic acting; at one point a critic wrote, "Barbara Lockard is a charming Bertha, Bartolo's maid ... she has excellent comic timing and good character development."

And what a character she is; either as a sultry, provocative gypsy in Bizet's *Carmen*, or a lovesick adolescent such as Mozart's Cherubino.

In 1959, she premiered the role of Jeannie in Pulitzer Prize-winner Paul Green's outdoor

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drama, *The Stephen Foster Story*. Over the next three years, she sang 175 performances of this unique production.

Her credits include over 30 roles; Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus*, Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly*, and the leading roles of Carmen and Delilah in *Samson and Delila*. She has performed in the *Judy Garland Show* at the Metropolitan Opera, the Goldovsky Opera Company, the Michigan Opera Theatre, the Oberlin Music Theater, the Festival Opera Company at Chautauqua and as Mrs. Ott in the European premier performance of Carlisle Floyd's *Susanna* with the NYC Opera. She also performed in Bernstein's *Wonderful Town*.

As glorious a merry-go-round as singing and acting were for Barbara, she also loved to teach. Her first job was at Kansas State Teachers College as assistant professor of voice and opera, where one of her students won the Metropolitan Opera District Competition. From her days in Kansas, Barbara loves to tell the story of a young lady whose hand-picked recital piece was *Somewhere Over the Rainbow*. Barbara, realizing the implication of this at the last minute, advised her to sing "anything" but *Over the Rainbow* in Kansas.

Baritone and former colleague Andreas Poulimenos commented, "if anyone wants a friend—anywhere, no one will find one better than Barbara." He relates an anecdote on Barbara that illustrates her good nature: "I had surgery several years ago. In one of the layers of suture, the surgeon used metal staples and, of course, one staple went missing—provoking all kinds of unpleasant symptoms and annoyances. I went to pick up my mail and found a huge box waiting for me; it was a box from Barbara marked, 'The Staples Company.' When I finally succeeded in unwrapping the many layers of paper, I found a small, sealed envelope. Inside were a dozen or so staples and a get-well note from Barbara. You see the humor and the caring were never ending companions!"

Composer and Professor Emeritus Wallace De Pue recalls meeting Barbara as a new faculty member. "She had a voice like a howitzer." On a more serious note, Wallace remembers that when his wife, Linda, was killed in a car accident, Barbara appeared unannounced at his front door, handed him a succulent chicken, turned around without saying a word, and left. "I think she knew if she talked she would end up crying," says Wallace, "but that is the unique way Barbara shows love."

Barbara tours for three weeks each May throughout northwest Ohio, performing as many as 17 shows in 10 days, with BGSU Opera for Youth. The student group presents works such as *Little Red Riding Hood* by Seymour Barab and *The Goose Girl* by Thomas Pasatieri.

She is also director of the Musical Theatre Camp offered through the College's Summer Music Institute.

Barbara married Jim (James Paul) Zimmerman on May 26, 1984. Jim laughingly tells stories about Barbara: "I often say Barbara's mind goes 100 mph, even in her sleep. I love music—Barbara is music—so I married her."

When asked of her summary philosophy in music, Barbara considered a minute and answered, "A good voice is a gift to be expanded with acting and musicianship. A singer must always have something to say to keep the drama going. Neither is complete without the other."

As a past president of Pro Musica, Barbara states, "Pro Musica provides a flexible monetary menu for our students' educational experience."

Sitting with Barbara and watching her direct *Arsenic and Old Lace* was a treat. She laughed at one of the scenes, leaned over, and whispered to me, "You know, my mother always thought I was *serious*."

CMA Campaign

\$3.6 million

goal: \$4.5 million

BGSU Campaign

\$83.9 million

goal: \$120 million

Kisma Jordan Essay

Tuesday Music Club Scholarship

I would like to thank the donors of Pro Musica for their encouragement and support of my participation in the Tuesday Music Club Scholarship. My involvement and successful completion of the competition demanded great sacrifice and dedication on my part, and I am pleased to report that it paid off with great reward. As the "Gertrude Marta Plaum Scholarship for Voice" recipient, I received an \$800 scholarship that I will use to further my vocal career!

Through the assistance provided by Pro Musica, I was able to take advantage of this learning experience and to devote myself wholeheartedly to my performance, free from the stress of financial constraints. For that reason, Pro Musica is very special to me and I look forward to your support while here at BGSU.

Rizo Arellano

Lyric Opera of Chicago
Young Artist Program Audition

I thank Pro Musica for their financial support as I pursue my singing aspirations in classical performance. Their generosity helped me to learn the audition process and to go through an actual audition at the Lyric Opera of Chicago's Young Artist Program.

While I was prepared from a musical standpoint, I lacked experience in the actual audition process. I arrived in the windy city a day-and-a-half early in order to find the opera house, to acclimate myself to the surroundings and to get to know the facility. On the fifth floor, I saw the opera house's costume shop and was surprised to hear how important costuming is.

When I was called to audition, the faculty as surprised to find I had brought my own accompanist. The judges were friendly and asked questions. I feel that I sang well under pressure and I hope to participate again.

Thank you again for your critica support.

Sarah Roth

Bluecoats Drum and Bugle Corps

I'll never forget touring with the Bluecoats Drum and Bugle Corps this summer.

The Bluecoats experience actually started in November 2004 when we began rehearsing the last weekend of every month in Canton. On May 21, we started a three-week rehearsal camp in southern Ohio followed immediately by a two-and-a-half month tour of the United States by bus. The generous grant I received from Pro Musica allowed me to take this tour.

There wasn't a day that I didn't play my instrument. From May 21 through August 13 we played. We began rehearsal at eight o'clock in the morning and finished at 11 o'clock at night. On show days, rehearsals were shorter so we could board the bus to travel to the next city. We frequently traveled during the wee hours of the night in order to save daylight hours for practice.

In spite of the intense schedule (or because of it), I know I want to teach high school band and inspire a passion for music in my students' lives. I want to have the knowledge, ability, and experience to lead them through rehearsal, concerts, and competitions. I learned a lot from watching our staff members teach. There were 35 staff members who rotated all summer. I learned new marching techniques and ways to teach them.

On a personal level, I learned to deal with performance anxiety and got used to practicing in front of people. Living in close proximity with 135 people raised my level of sophistication and tolerance. Thank you so much, Pro Musica!

Sarah Connelly

Third International Summer
Academy & Festival

I received a grant to study at the Ionian University in Corfu, Greece, for a week in July as part of the Third International Summer Academy & Festival hosted by Ionian University. It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience. The ability to study violin there combined music with travel knowledge and sophistication.

I studied violin with Spyros Gikontis daily in master classes and learned the musicality aspects of Bruch's Violin Concerto and solo Bach.

I attended night concerts performed by Bowling Green State University and Ionian University faculty. I performed in the Student Concert at the end of the festival. Interacting with Greek students helped me learn more about Greek culture, food, and music. I made friends and have memories to last a lifetime.

Finances are a challenge in college and without monetary help from Pro Musica I would not have been able to go to Greece to study.